

“Ash-Shaikh 'Abdul-'Azeez bin 'Abdullah bin Muhammad Aal Ash-Shaikh discusses using the titles *Salafee* and *Atharee*”

His Eminence, *Ash-Shaikh 'Abdul-'Azeez bin 'Abdullah bin Muhammad Aal Ash-Shaikh* (The current Grand *Muftee* of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia)

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<http://Alifta.com/Fatawa/FatawaDetails.aspx?View=Page&PageID=8785&PageNo=1&BookID=2#P97>

Slightly modified from translation of Br. Abu Sumayyah Aqeel Walker originally found on www.AsSalafi.com

Question: Some Muslims from other countries ask me about my *Math-hab*. Should I tell them that I am *Muhammadee* as a way of ascribing myself to the Prophet (*sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*)? Or should I say that I am *Salafee*, or what should I say? May Allaah reward you with good.

Answer: What is obligatory upon every Muslim is that he ascribe himself to Islaam, for that is the legislated name which Allaah mentioned in His Book, where He said,

"And strive (make *Jihaad*) in Allaah's cause in the true way that you should strive. He chose you all and He did not make any hardship upon you all in the religion. (It is) the religion of your father, *Ibraaheem* (Abraham). He (Allaah) named you all Muslims before and in this (Revelation)." [Al-Hajj (22):78]

Indeed the *Salaf* used to ascribe themselves to *Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah*. They meant by it that they followed the Sunnah of the Chosen One (Muhammad - *sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*), and they adhered to the *Jamaa'ah* (group, main body) of the Muslims, which means the group in reference to knowledge, and the group in reference to physically (staying with the group). So when the Muslim ascribes himself to this ascription (*Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah*), while being conscious and aware of this meaning, then there is no harm in that. Likewise, also the ascription to the *Salaf* (the predecessors) and *Al-Athar* (the old way), hence the person says *Salafee* or *Atharee* (i.e. about himself). This is not intended as a way of declaring oneself pure or righteous, rather it is only so that the person will be distinct from the rest of the people of *Bida'* (innovations). Thus, there is no harm in this.

And that which is obligatory to beware of is that this ascription (*Salafee* or *Atharee*) should not be the cause of matters that are not legislated, like ignorant party spirit (*'Asabiyyah*), which has no sanctioned support in the religion (of Islaam). For verily the names *Al-Muhaajiroon* (the immigrants) and *Al-Ansaar* (the helpers) are names that are sanctioned and reported in the Book of Allaah and the *Sunnah* of the Messenger of Allaah (*sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*). Allaah, Who is free of any imperfections, says,

"And the first and foremost from the *Muhaajiroon* (immigrants who migrated from Makkah to Madinah), and the *Ansaar* (the helpers of Madinah who aided the Prophet and the immigrants), and those who followed them in goodness, Allaah is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him." [At-Tawbah (9):100]

And He, Who is free of any imperfections, says,

"Indeed Allaah accepted the repentance of the Prophet, and the *Muhaajireen* (immigrants who migrated from Makkah to Madinah) and the *Ansaar* (the helpers of Madinah who aided the Prophet and the immigrants), who followed him in the hour of difficulty." [At-Tawbah (9):117]

And other than this (exists) from the evidences as well. Yet, along with this, verily this ascription (*Al-Muhaajiroon* and *Al-Ansaar*), when it goes out of its bounds into affairs that are not legislated, then it becomes something that is not pleasing. For verily when two men quarreled in the time of the Messenger of Allaah (*sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*), one of them said, "Hey, *Muhaajireen* (Immigrants)!" And the other said, "Hey, *Ansaar* (Helpers)!" [Translator's Note: They were calling their respective groups to come aid them in their fight against each other.] So the Messenger of Allaah (*sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) came out, and he was angry. He said, "Is it the call of the time of pre-Islamic ignorance (that you all are using), while I am amongst you?" Thus, the Messenger of Allaah (*sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) rejected it, and he called it the call of the pre-Islamic time of Ignorance. (The full hadeeth can be read at <http://SahihMuslim.com/sps/smm/sahihmuslim.cfm?scn=dspchaptersfull&BookID=32&ChapterID=1072>)

So what is important is the realization and manifestation of worship being for Allaah alone upon *Baseerah* (conviction, certainty, sure guidance, evidence), and following the *Sunnah* of His Prophet (*sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*). Thus, if that is realized and it is adhered to, then it does not harm the person if he does not ascribe himself to anyone. And if his ascription is to *Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah*, then that is better, for it is following the ways of Salaf and it is a form of distinction for him from the people of *Al-Bida'* (the innovations).